26: Schwimmer E-S (1966-1970) 1974
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the dead person. At ordinary harvest feasts and bride-wealth payments they are seen on display platforms along with taro and other vegetables. They are then subsidiary to taro and pigs, which are the main food gifts, but at mortuary feasts vast quantities are given, saved from the dead man's palms, which are made taboo until this feast. Dry coconut and areca are strewn on graves by affines of the deceased.

The distinctive features perceived by Orokaiva in each species should also be summarized. Coconut is believed to be a valuable adjunct to the diet of children and dogs (also chickens). In Orokaiva myths, its miraculous effect on children and dogs is often described. To the scientific observer this effect is natural enough as coconut is an important source of first-class protein for both children and dogs, who otherwise do not get much first-class protein. Coconut oil is used as a cosmetic for hair and body not only to enhance beauty but also for its magical efficacy, for the purification of man-slayers (Williams, 1930: 175, 207), and for women who are being initiated or who welcome visitors at dances. In all such cases it is the task of a male to pour the coconut milk over the persons whose magical protection is intended.

Areca, a mildly hallucinogenic fruit, is chewed by women as much as by men. When friends are sitting together, it is shared in much the same way as beer among white Australians. People offer nuts to each other but expect to come out approximately even. Visitors from other villages expect to be offered areca by their hosts. Its main physiological effect is to create a dreamy amiability and to break down hostility that might otherwise exist. Its magical uses, mostly in association with some medicine of more specific purpose, are too many to enumerate. A girl carries a bunch of areca at the ceremony which ends her seclusion after first menstruation. She normally offers it to her man at lovers' meetings.

Although I have a number of coconut and areca myths on record, I shall discuss here only one, the fullest one, which illustrates my argument most clearly. A beautiful girl, noted for her remarkable breasts, had the misfortune of killing all the young men with whom she slept. Her breasts pricked and killed them.